RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WELLS.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health
FOR THE YEAR 1908.

STREET, SOMERSET,
FEBRUARY 16th, 1909.

To the Rural District Council of Wells.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit my Report for the year ended December 31st, 1908.

Area. 58045 acres.

Population. Census 1901—10767. Estimated to the middle of 1908 at 10311.

Geology. Dolomitic conglomerate at Chewton Mendip and Westbury; mountain limestone at Priddy; red marl at Dinder, North Wootton, and Rodney Stoke; red marl and river gravel at Wookey; lower lias at West Pennard, Baltonsborough, Butleigh and Walton; alluvium and peat at Glastonbury Moor.

Occupation. Chiefly agricultural, cheese and cider making, dairy farming, paper factories at Wookey and Wookey Hole; lead mines at Priddy. Some of the inhabitants of Butleigh and Walton work at the shoe, leather and skin factories at Street and Glastonbury, and at the quarries at Street.

Birth Rate. 240 births registered (125 males, 115 females); giving a birth rate of 23.2 per 1000 per annum. Two of the births were illegitimate (both males).

Death Rate. 191 deaths registered (89 males, 102 females), giving a death rate of 18.5 per 1000 per annum.

69 deaths occurred in the Somerset and Bath County Asylum. Deducting these, the *corrected death rate* for the Rural District is 11.8 per 1000 per annum.

Zymotic Death Rate. Six deaths were registered from Zymotic disease, giving a *Zymotic rate* of 0.58 per 1000 living.

Infant Mortality. The Infant Mortality per 1000 births is 66.6; 16 deaths under one year being registered.

FOR THE YEAR 1907.

Birth Rate.	Birth rate	per 1000 living	20.14
Death Rate.	Death rate	„ „	20.14
Corrected Death Rate.	Corrected Death rate ..	„ „	11.47
Zymotic Death Rate.	Zymotic Death rate ..	„ „	0.48
Infant Mortality per 1000 Births.	Infant Mortality per 1000 births		62.2

The Births in the District were distributed as follows :—

Table of Births.

Wells Out	75	North Wootton	6
Rodney Stoke	14	Meare	26
Wookey	27	Walton	8
Priddy	8	Butleigh	11
Chewton Mendip.. ..	17	West Pennard	13
Dinder	4	Baltonsborough	12
Westbury	12	Sharpham	2
Godney	5		

Ages Table of Deaths:

Table of Deaths.

Under 1 year there were 16 deaths.
1 and under 5 years there were 9 deaths.
5 „ „ 15 „ „ „ 4 „
15 „ „ 25 „ „ „ 8 „
25 „ „ 65 „ „ „ 78 „
65 and upwards „ „ 76 „

The Deaths were distributed in the following Districts:—

Wells Out	37	Baltonsborough	7
Westbury	10	Butleigh	9
Rodney Stoke	10	Meare	10
Wookey	7	West Pennard	15
Priddy	3	Walton	4
Chewton Mendip	8	Sharpham	1
Dinder	1	Lunatic Asylum	69

No death registered from Godney nor North Wootton.

Causes of Death during the year.

	R.D.	Asylum.		R.D.	Asylum.
Measles	4		Pneumonia	14	1
Diphtheria	1		Alcoholisms / Cirrhoris of Liver	2	2
Diarrhœa	1		Premature Birth	6	
Enteritis	1		Diseases and Accidents of Partruition	3	
Phthisis / Pulmonary Tuberculosis	4	12	Heart Diseases	20	14
Other Tubercular Diseases	2		Accidents	5	
Cancer / Malignant Disease	10	3	Suicides	3	
Bronchitis	11	3	All other Causes	35	34

Water Supply.

The districts of Butleigh, Chewton Mendip, Dinder, Priddy, Rodney Stoke, part of West Pennard, Godney, part of Polsham, Wookey Hole, Baltonsborough, and Horrington are well supplied with water, ample in quantity and of good quality; private supplies together with the Glastonbury, Street, and Shepton Mallet Councils' supplies contributing respectively their portions to several of these villages.

North Wootton. A public supply for this district is badly needed. I understand that negotiations have taken place for the purchase of a spring by the R.D. Council in the neighbourhood for the supply of this district.

West Pennard. Part of this parish is well supplied from the Glastonbury Corporation mains—the outlying parts, viz.—Steanbow, Sticklynch, East Street, Southtown and Higher Woodlands—which at present rely either on pond water or shallow wells for their supply—badly need a better supply. A Local Government Board Inquiry has recently been held relative to the application of the R.D. Council for sanction to borrow money for the purpose of carrying out a scheme for the supply of the whole of this district.

The district of Meare and Westhay is dependent mostly on shallow wells, and in some instances on the river for their supply. The possibility of pollution, and in dry weather the running short of the supply and the dependence on the river, are unsatisfactory features in the supply of this district. The supply for the outlying part of the district also, *e.g.*—Ashcott corner, which draws from the ditches or the rhine, is also unsatisfactory.

Part of Westbury district is well supplied—the Hollywell part not being so satisfactory.

Walton is dependent on wells, which in dry weather, as was the case last year, soon become exhausted. With the Street main so near—if the supply therefrom could be extended to this village a great improvement in this respect would be effected.

Sharpham at present derives its supply from rain-water tanks, the ditches, and the canal. A stand-pipe, however, from the Street Urban Council's main is shortly to be erected in this district which will convey for the use of all a good supply of wholesome drinking water.

I have examined a number of samples of water during the year.

Sewerage and Drainage.

No general system of drainage exists in the district. At Priddy, Coxley, Wookey, Henton, Easton, Westbury, and Horrington there are no drains. At Chewton Mendip there is a sewer with house drains connected discharging into the river. At Draycott and Rodney Stoke there are sewers and open drains discharging into the moors. At Dinder there is one

small length of sewer. At Butleigh, Meare, West Pennard, Baltonsborough, and Walton there are sewers or drains discharging either into the river, the ditches, or on to the land. As reported by the Inspector of Nuisancess, the common sewer at Baltonsborough has been extended, and that at West Pennard repaired, and in a number of instances new drains have been laid or repaired to abate existing nuisances. Privies with cesspits are principally in use in the district; these are naturally a source of danger—from their infrequent emptying and the possibility of contaminating adjacent water supplies. The system of earth-closets is encouraged where practicable. From the Nuisance Inspectors' reports, which are annexed, it will be seen that considerable action has been taken by them in the district relative to insufficient or unsatisfactory privy accommodation.

No regular system for the disposal of excrement is in force in the district; the greater part of this, however, is placed on the land.

Wells Sewage Works.

Accompanied by the Inspector of Nuisances, I have visited these works at intervals during the year. The pollution of the streams into which the effluent is discharged has continued more or less, the odour from the stagnant sewage on the field being at times most marked. The Wells City Council I understand have been in further communication with the Local Government Board concerning a scheme submitted by their Engineer for the provision of further filtering beds and the dealing with the large quantity of storm water which at times comes through the tanks.

This I trust will speedily be carried out.

Prevalence of Disease.

Seventeen cases of notifiable disease have been reported during the year, against fifty-four for the year 1907. Three cases of Scarlet Fever: two in the Wells Out District and one in the parish of Wookey (Yarley). Nine cases of Diphtheria: five from Wookey and four from Meare. Three cases of Erysipelas: two in the Wells Out District and one from Chewton Mendip. Two cases of Typhoid Fever from Horrington.

The various premises have been visited by the Inspector of Nuisances, and in most cases by myself; the sanitary conditions of which have been enquired into and investigation made into the possible source of the disease. Notices for isolation and disinfection have been given, and as far as possible, isolation effected. This, however, is not an easy matter, especially in cottages with scanty accommodation. It is here that the want of an Isolation Hospital for the district is keenly felt. Disinfection of the various premises has been carried out afterwards by the Inspector of Nuisances.

In March, owing to an outbreak of Measles at North Wootton, I advised the closure of the School. In March, also, the Schools at Chewton Mendip and West Pennard (Church School) were closed for a similar reason. In April, the Wesleyan School at West Pennard was also closed for Measles. In May, I visited the Wookey School, a few cases of Mumps being notified to me.

Each of the foregoing districts I visited on the outbreak of the disease.

In August, owing to the prevalence of Measles, &c. at Coxley, the re-opening of the School was deferred for two or three weeks.

In September and following months, the Chief Medical Inspector for the County notified me of the presence of cases of Measles or Whooping Cough amongst Scholars at Dinder, Wookey, Westbury, and Wookey Hole. I visited each School, but did not think it necessary to advise the closure of either. In September, also, a severe epidemic of Mumps prevailed at North Wootton—the School again being closed. In October, the same disease prevailed to a limited extent at Westbury and Meare. In December, at Wookey, Sore Throats and several cases of Diphtheria occurred, in consequence of which I advised the closure of the School till after the Christmas Vacation. I personally, again visited each School.

Inspections have been made by the Medical Inspectors appointed by the County Council of Scholars attending the various Schools in the district. No report, however, has as yet reached me as the results of their examinations.

Isolation Hospital

None. The need of one at times is severely felt where it is impossible to get satisfactory home-isolation. Cottages at Worminster are retained by the R.D. Council for

the isolation of Smallpox, should any case arise; but, as I have previously reported, its inaccessibility precludes its use for general isolation purposes.

Housing of the Working Classes.

Visits paid with the Inspectors, from whose reports it will be seen that house-to-house inspection of various districts have been made by them, with the result that numerous unsatisfactory conditions have been found, especially with regard to privy accommodation, and in most instances these have been remedied.

Four cases of overcrowding have been dealt with.

Supervision is exercised over the erection of new houses, a certificate of occupation being granted by the R.D. Council only on a satisfactory report from the Inspector.

Disinfection Means.

Fumigation by Sulphur Dioxide or Fumeldelyde. Disinfectants are supplied gratuitously by the R.D.C. All premises from which infectious diseases have been notified have afterwards been disinfected by the Inspector of Nuisances for the district.

Dairies—Cowsheds and Milkshops.

Preliminary steps are being taken by the R.D.C. for the preparation of a register on the completion of which, I understand, the inspection of these will be proceeded with. The dairy produce of the district is very considerable, the milk supply being, generally, of excellent quality. Doubtless the action to be taken with regard to the systematic inspection of the Dairies and Cowsheds will result in extra cleanliness and improved sanitation of all these premises—together with special care being taken by all engaged in the Dairy work—to produce pure and wholesome milk and Dairy supplies.

In the case of Notification of Disease from premises coming under this heading, special instructions have been given by your officers for all necessary precautions to be taken by all engaged in Dairy work, and investigation has been made relative to the sanitation and water supply of the premises, orders being given for the correction of any insanitary conditions found.

Twelve cases of Buine Anthrax in the district have been notified. The necessary steps were taken by the Police, but in each case the premises are visited by the Inspector of Nuisances or myself.

General Inspections.

Slaughter-houses, Bake-houses, and Public Schools inspected. No Bye-laws are in force in the district, the adoption of suitable ones would greatly enhance the control of the Council.

As reported, I have visited most of the Public Schools in the district during the year. In known cases of infectious disease amongst the scholars, their attendance at school has been prohibited until the period of infection was over.

Factory and Workshops Act, 1901.

Inspections have been made by the Inspectors of Nuisances and myself. Registers of Workshops are kept, and the various Factories and Workshops and Homeworkers premises visited; the sanitation, ventilation, means of escape in case of fire, and the provision of suitable sanitary conveniences attended to.

Factories inspected ..	16	Workshops	51
Bake-houses	12	Work-places	43

Under regulations recently issued by the Local Government Board, cases of Tuberculosis in Poor Law patients will now be notified to the Medical Officer of Health. No voluntary system of notification is at present in operation in the district.

Apart from a private sanatorium in the district, no hospital accommodation is provided for tuberculous patients (apart from the Workhouse Infirmary). Some cases, through local subscribers, are sent to Sanatoriums elsewhere.

I append the Tables of Statistics as required by the Local Government Board together with Reports from the Inspectors of Nuisances, to whose zealous co-operation I am again greatly indebted.

I am,
Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

GEORGE W. EGLINTON.

Reports and Summary of Inspectors of Nuisances.

No. 1 DISTRICT.

Inspector of Nuisances Summary for the year ended 31st December, 1908.

The following is a summary of the cases reported by me to the Council, and dealt with by order :—

	No. of cases.
Dwelling houses with insufficient privy accommodation	8
Dwelling houses overcrowded	1
Dwelling houses unfit for human habitation, Notices served, houses done up or closed ...	2
Infected dwellings : Occupiers served with notice as to isolation of patients, disinfection, &c.	9
Dwellings and clothing disinfected as directed by the Medical Officer of Health . .	6
Public School premises disinfected as directed by the Medical Officer of Health ...	1
New dwelling houses erected for which certificates of occupation have been granted by the Council	7
Dilapidated and dangerous buildings repaired	8
Dilapidated and dangerous privies repaired	126
Nuisances arising from foul and choked drains, foul accumulations	13
Animals kept in such a state as to be a nuisance	2
New drains laid and old ones repaired	6
Slaughter houses, bake houses, and public schools inspected (no bye-laws in force) ...	26
Pollution of streams dealt with	2
Open well covered and protected from surface pollution	1
Formal notices served by the Inspector	169

Factory and Workshops Act, 1901.

There are registered in the District : 9 Factories, 27 Workshops, 43 Workplaces, 7 Bake houses, 2 Outworkers, total 88

All these have been visited during the year, and are in a fairly clean and satisfactory condition.

During the year I have made a house-to-house inspection of the Parish of Westbury, in which there are 136 inhabited houses ; the Parish of Wookey, 232 inhabited houses ; and the Hamlets of East and West Horrington, in the Parish of Out St. Cuthbert, 86 inhabited houses, all cases arising from this inspection are included in the above summary.

In addition to the above, a number of inspections have been made in my rounds, and verbal notice given to abate nuisances.

PHILIP WILLIAMS, *Inspector No. 1 District.*

No. 2 DISTRICT.

Inspector of Nuisances Summary for the year ended 31st December, 1908.

The following is a summary of cases reported to the Council, and dealt with by order :—

	No. of cases.
Unwholesome Water : Supplies laid on to dwellings at Godney	13
Common sewers extended at Baltonsborough	2
,, repaired at West Pennard	1
New drains laid to abate nuisances	7
Liquid manure tanks provided to abate nuisances	2
Dilapidated and filthy privies repaired and cleansed	7
Nuisances arising from foul accumulations, &c.	18
Animals so kept as to be a nuisance	8
Slaughter houses inspected (no bye-laws)	4
Dilapidated and dirty dwellings (1 repaired 1 closed)	2
Overcrowded dwellings dealt with	3
Dangerous buildings taken down and rebuilt	2
New dwelling, certificate for occupation	1
Infected dwellings : Occupiers served with notices as to isolation and disinfection (disinfectants supplied)	4
Infected dwellings : Disinfected as directed by Medical Officer of Health, (disease in no instance spreading beyond the first case)	4
Formal notices served and letters written by Inspector	52

Factories and Workshops Act, 1901.

The following are registered :—7 Factories, 24 Workshops, 40 Workplaces, 4 Bake houses, and 14 Homeworkers, total 89

These have been inspected and are in a fairly good sanitary condition.

In addition to the above, a large number of inspections have been made, and verbal notices given by me in my rounds and periodical inspections. In the majority of cases repeated inspections are necessary.

I have also rendered some assistance in connection with the Water Supplies of the District.

EDWIN H. PADFIELD, *Inspector No. 2 District.*